**Freedom of Information (FOI) questions on local authority education provision for children and young people with vision impairment: 2015**

**1: Organisation and funding of your local authority Education Vision Impairment (VI) Advisory service**

**Q1. How does your local authority meet its responsibility to provide a VI service (i.e. specialist educational provision for children and young people with vision impairment)?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | In-house service provided centrally by the LA | \* |
| **B** | Part of a consortium of LAs/joint arrangement with other LAs Please give names of the other LAs:  Please give the name of the lead LA: |  |
| **C** | Bought in from another LA (please give the name of the LA) |  |
| **D** | Commissioned to a school/group of schools |  |
| **E** | Commissioned to a charity or voluntary organisation |  |
| **F** | Commissioned to an external (non-public sector) agency |  |
| **G** | Other (please give details) |  |

**Q2. How is the VI service managed in your LA?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A** | Within generic SEN service |
| **B** | Within sensory service |
| **C** | Stand alone VI service\* |
| **D** | Other (please give details) |

**Q3a. What is the VI service budget for 2015/16?**

Budget 2015/2016            £607,100              Plus VISTA £15,500          £622,600

**Q3b. What was the VI service budget for 2014/15?**

Budget 2014/2015            £601,500              Plus VISTA £15,500          £617,000

**Q4. Since April 2014 have any changes been made to the way that the VI service is provided, managed and/or funded (i.e. where answers to Q1, Q2 and Q3 would have been different in 2014 to 2015)?**

NO

**Section 2: Number of children and young people on the VI service caseload**

273

**Q5a. Please give the number of children and young people with vision impairment on the VI service caseload (i.e. those supported by the VI service and not included in Q5b below:**

**Total aged 0 - 4:** 45   

**Total aged 5 - 16:** 195

**Total aged 17 - 19:** 5

**Total aged 20 - 25:** 9

**Q5b. Please give the number of children and young people with vision impairment, known to the VI service but not receiving direct support from the LA service (e.g. whose family home is in the LA but who are being educated in a non- LA provision). These are *in addition to* CYP included in Q5a.**

**Total aged 0 - 4:**

**Total aged 5 - 16:** 2

**Total aged 17 - 19:** 12

**Total aged 20 - 25:** 5

**Q6. What is the total number of children and young people on the VI service caseload (recorded in Q5a) who use (or in the case of EYFS children, are expected to use) braille as their sole or main literacy medium?**

7

**Q6a. What is the total number of children and young people known to the VI service (recorded in Q5b) who use braille as their sole or main literacy medium?**

4

**Section 3: VI service policies**

**Q7. What criteria does the VI service use to determine eligibility for support?**

1. Eligibility is based on the child’s visual acuity (VA) level NO
2. Only CYP who are registered as severely sight impaired/blind or sight impaired/partially sighted are eligible for support NO
3. Other (please give details) Service criteria

**Q7a. Have these criteria changed since April 2014? (If ‘yes’ please give details of previous criteria, when changed, and the reason why)**

Yes - We now support temporally patched children where they are wearing a patch for an extended time during their school day and their vision is seriously reduced. This is only after an assessment and possible liaising with the hospital.

**Q8. Please give details of your LA’s criteria for assessment for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan for CYP with VI:**

The majority of children and young people with special educational needs will have their needs met within local mainstream provision within schools or settings. The Local Authority, however, must conduct an assessment and prepare a plan where the special educational provision required to meet the child or young person’s needs cannot reasonably be provided from within the resources normally available to mainstream schools and settings.

In considering whether a statutory assessment is necessary, the Local Authority will pay particular attention to:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Criteria |
| 1. | The child or young person’s academic attainment (or developmental milestones for younger children) and rate of progress. |
|  | Developmental milestones at or below:  Foundation Stage 1 18 - 24 months  Foundation Stage 2 24 - 30 months  National Curriculum levels of attainment or equivalent (within the past 3 months) in core subjects at or below:  Key Stage 1 P4 - P5  Key Stage 2 P5 - P6  Key Stage 3 P6 - P8  Key Stage 4 P8 - 1A  Academic/vocational attainment at or below:  16+ Entry level 2  and a rate of progress less than 2 National Curriculum sublevels or equivalent over a previous 12 month period (KS 1 and above) |
| 2. | The nature, extent and context of the Child or young person’s SEN and/or physical, emotional and social development and heath needs |
|  | An assessment of need including:  - school assessments/information gathering  - assessment by appropriate outside agencies  - information supplied by the CYP  - information supplied by the parents/carers |
| 3. | Action already being taken and progress achieved |
|  | Interventions normally for at least 2 terms in line with mainstream school/setting SEND provision expectations and which:  - are matched to need  - are based on evidence of effectiveness (i.e. research and/or school evaluations)  - are planned with the child or young person and their parents  - reflect realistic and appropriate targets  - implement advice provided by appropriate outside agencies  - are delivered by staff with appropriate skills and knowledge  - are reviewed and adjusted accordingly |

Each request is considered in terms of the child or young person’s individual needs and circumstances. However, it would normally be expected that each element of criteria 1 to 3 will need to be satisfied for a statutory assessment where the primary need is cognition and learning. For other areas of need, while criteria 1 will still be relevant, each element of criteria 2 and 3 will need to be satisfied.

**Q9. What criteria does the VI service use for allocating levels of support?**

1. NatSIP Eligibility Criteria for Scoring Support Levels (2012):    NO
2. An earlier version of the NatSIP/SERSEN Eligibility Criteria:     NO
3. Modified NatSIP/SERSEN criteria:         NO
4. Banding system:                                       NO
5. Locally developed criteria:                     NO
6. Other arrangement (please give details):        YES

Discussion between QTVI teacher and supervising senior teacher at monthly supervision sessions. A scale of 1-10 is used with 1 being an annual visit to 10 which is 9 hours a week.

The (Wales) Visual Impairment Pathway        NO

**Q10. Are any groups of children and young people with VI that are NOT supported by the VI service?**

a) Specific age groups (please give details of age groups not supported): YES

16+ in colleges unless our service is bought in by them.

1. Children/YP in specific types of setting(please give details of the settings where no support NO
2. Children/YP with complex needs:                                                      NO
3. Any other groups (please give details of the groups concerned):           NO

**Q10a. If YES, to any of the above, when was support withdrawn?**

Never previously supported

**Section 4: Joint working with other agencies**

**Q11. What arrangements do you have for working with health and social care?**

1. Established arrangement with Health for referring babies and children to the VI service
2. Multi-disciplinary meetings with health and social care
3. Regular meetings and/or contact with social care
4. Regular meetings and/or contact with health
5. Other (please give details)

We work closely with the above, but there are no established, formal arrangements/pathways. We depend upon direct referrals from practitioners working in the above fields. Hospital referrals are reliant upon individual consultants/paediatricians and a VISTA (local VI charity) family support officer referring following children’s clinic.

**Q12. Who in your LA holds the vision impairment register for children and young people who are blind or partially sighted?**

1. Social care sensory team:          NO
2. Social care children’s team:      NO
3. Local society for blind people:  YES
4. Other (please give details):       YES / NO

**Section 5: VI service staffing**

**Q13a. Which (if any) of the following qualifications are held by the person with responsibility for strategic management of the VI service? (Please tick all that apply)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | Qualified teacher of pupils with vision impairment (QTVI)  (i.e. holds the mandatory qualification (MQ) in VI) | \* |
| **B** | Qualified teacher of the Deaf (TOD)  (i.e. holds the mandatory qualification (MQ) in HI) |  |
| **C** | Qualified teacher of pupils with Multi-sensory Impairment (QTMSI)  (i.e. holds the mandatory qualification (MQ) in MSI) |  |
| **D** | Other qualifications |  |

**Q13b. Please give the numbers of teachers employed directly by the VI service (this includes peripatetic/advisory and school based teachers and VI service manager if s/he has a caseload)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of teachers** | **Number as full time equivalent (FTE)** |
| QTVI with mandatory qualification (MQ) (VI) | 7 | 9 |
| In training for MQ (VI) |  |  |
| Qualified teachers without MQ (VI) who will begin training within 2 years |  |  |
| Qualified teachers without MQ (VI) not in or due to begin training within 2 years |  |  |
| QTMSI with MQ (MSI) | 1 due to start training Sep’15 | 1 |
| QTVI ***and*** QTMSI MQ (holds both qualifications) | 1 | 1 |
| QTVI vacancies currently advertised | 0.6 |  |
| QTVI vacancies – advertised but no suitable applicants |  |  |

**Q14. Please give the numbers of teaching assistants (TAs) in your LA who are providing support to pupils with vision impairment (this includes service and school based staff)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Employment arrangements** | **Number of TAs** |
| Employed and recruited directly by VI service – centrally based/peripatetic | 1 |
| Employed and recruited directly by VI service – school based |  |
| Employed and recruited directly by schools and supported by VI service | 42 |
| Employed and recruited directly by schools with no involvement from VI service | We would not know this. |
| Other arrangement (please give details) |  |

**Q15. Please give details of any other staff employed directly by the VI service (not already included in Q13b or Q14), and staff who are externally commissioned by the VI service**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of post** | **Number of people** | **Number as full-time equivalent (FTE)** | **Number of externally commissioned staff** |
| Resource technicians (for production of accessible materials) | 3 |  | 2.5 |
| ICT support technicians | 1 |  | 0.6 |
| Dedicated early years staff |  |  |  |
| Mobility/rehabilitation officer |  | 0.5 | 2 commissioned from our local charity VISTA. |
| Mobility/habilitation officer for children |  |  | Our TA listed in Q14. has this qualification. |
| Admin/secretarial | 1 | 0.5 |  |
| Other (please give details)  Touch Typing tutor | 1 | 0.5 |  |

Q15. Since 1 April 2014 has the VI service lost or gained any staff posts?

NO

**If YES, please give number of posts lost or gained**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of post** | **Number of posts lost** | **Number of posts gained** |
| Managers |  |  |
| QTVIs |  |  |
| Teaching assistants |  |  |
| Resource technicians |  |  |
| ICT support technicians |  |  |
| Dedicated early years staff |  |  |
| Mobility/rehabilitation/habilitation officer |  |  |
| Admin/secretarial |  |  |
| Other (please give details) |  |  |

Section 5: Proposed future changes to the VI service

Q16. Are there any formal proposals for future changes to the way that the VI service is funded and/or organised

NO

If 'YES', please give details of changes including when this will take effect:

Q17. Are there any proposals for future changes to VI service policies and/or practices in educational support for CYP with VI?

YES - Presently looking at supporting post 19 EHC/statemented pupils.

If 'YES', please give details of changes including when this will take effect:

Unknown